Disney's

THE LION KING

How Tall, Zazu?

Zazu the hornbill is a tattletale! A gang of young animals on the Pride Lands thinks Zazu should keep his long beak out of their business, so they dream up a game called get-Zazu. It works so well that even Mufasa, Zazu's boss, starts to wonder if Zazu is right for the job of steward to the Lion King. Yoicks! What a predicament!

Grolier Books

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SOME SWAHILI WORDS

Cheka
to joke

Lulu
pearl, precious

Muwa
sugar cane

Nzee
old

Nzuri
good, beautiful

Pudini
caramel pudding

Sukari
sugar

Mayai
eggs

Pamba
cotton

Disney's

THE LION KING

HOW TRUE, ZAZU?

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CHAPTER

1

Why is the sky blue?" asked Kopa.

Zazu smiled. "The earth liked that color so much, it put blue all over the sky to look at." Zazu was steward to Kopa's father, Simba, the Lion King. He was baby-sitting Kopa while his mother, Nala, was hunting and Simba was taking a nap.

"And why do trees grow so tall?" asked Kopa.

"Because trees like the flavor of air that's way up high." Zazu could see a long morning of questions from Kopa. They were resting on Pride Rock, which

overlooked the vast grasslands all the way to the blue hills.

"And why do you fly so far around the Pride Lands?" asked Kopa.

"I fly everywhere so I can see everything and report to your father." Zazu stared at the silver Zuberi River, which meandered across the plain. It would be wonderful to fly to Zulu Falls right now, he thought.

"But why?"

"Because it's important, and he knows I'll tell him the truth about what is going on in the Pride Lands." Yes, a cold drink of water at Zulu Falls would be marvelous.

"But why?" asked Kopa.

Zazu took a deep breath. No Zulu Falls for him this morning. Kopa would never let him go. But these questions had gone on for long enough. From now on, he'd do all the talking.

"Let me tell you a story," said Zazu with a smile.

"I love stories," said Kopa. "Is there a big ugly beast with three horns and sharp teeth in it?"

"As a matter of fact, there is, sort of."

Kopa sat up. "I'm all ears," he said. He had heard his mother say that to Simba. It made him feel grown up to say it to Zazu.

Zazu preened his feathers, cleared his throat, and began to speak.

"News gathering is a family tradition for me," he said. "My mother, Zuzu, was the steward to your great-grandfather, Ahadi. When I was still a fledgling, she began to train me to take her place with Ahadi's son, Mufasa, when he became the Lion King." Zazu puffed out his feathers. The hot sun felt good.

"Mufasa's son, Simba—your father—was next in line to be the Lion King. But Mufasa's evil brother, Scar, wanted to be king himself. Scar and his hyena cronies killed Mufasa, and Scar convinced Simba that he had caused his father's death.

Simba ran away to a distant jungle to forget what he thought he had done. As you might expect, Scar was a bad ruler, and your mother, Nala, went on a journey to look for help. In her hunt, she found Simba and told him he had to return to the Pride Lands and take his rightful place as Lion King."

Kopa nodded seriously. He had heard this story before. "And then my father defeated Scar and became the new Lion King," he said.

"All this happened long ago, before you were born," said Zazu. "The story I am going to tell you took place before your father was born. Mufasa had just become the Lion King."

"Is Uncle Scar in the story?"

"No, he was spending most of his time away from Pride Rock because he could not bear to see his brother rule the Pride Lands."

"I'll bet he was hanging with the hyenas, right?"

Zazu nodded. "As I said, this was a long time ago, and Mufasa was busy learning how to rule. He wasn't giving much thought to his brother then."

"Is that when you became Mufasa's steward?"

"When my mother saw what a fine ruler Mufasa was, she decided it was time for her to retire so she could travel. Mufasa made me his steward in her place. Mama pecked me on the beak and flew off to follow the Zuberi River to its source. I was on my own, but she had trained me well—perhaps too well. I reported everything I observed to Mufasa, which was a mistake."

"What's wrong with that?" asked Kopa.

"It's not necessary to report every little thing. But I had a hard time telling the difference between what was important and what was petty. I tried to give Mufasa all the information I could so that bad things wouldn't happen."

"But why do bad things happen?"

"Everything we do makes something happen. We have to think about others around us," said Zazu. "If you pull up a bush on the plain, you might be pulling up some little creature's house. Or if you tell someone there's no danger when there is, he might get hurt."

"I get it!" said Kopa. "You should be careful about what you do and say."

"Right!" said Zazu. "But I was so worried somebody might get hurt, I kept poking my nose into everyone's business. And it kept getting me into trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Well, once, for instance, I overheard two of the ostriches talking about beating another ostrich. I didn't like the sound of that, so I told Mufasa. He went right over to those ostriches to find out what was going on. It turned out they were talking about beating another ostrich in a kicking contest. Ostriches are fine kickers."

"So, how do you keep from making that kind of mistake?" asked Kopa.

"You have to check out the situation carefully so that you have a clear idea of what is happening," Zazu said. "I remember my first summer in particular, when my reporting got out of hand and terrible things happened. It was a lesson from which we all learned a great deal."

CHAPTER

2

The morning sun shone down on the animals gathering at the water hole. Nzee, an antelope, stood off to one side, staring into the distance. Her daughter, Nzuri, was nearby, munching on grass.

"What's the matter?" asked Pembe the elephant, who was on her way to the water hole with her two children, Lulu and Cheka. "Why aren't you drinking?"

"Oh, it's that nosy Zazu," answered Nzee. "It's terrible the way he reports everything we do to Mufasa. I told little Nzuri that the grass was better on the east side of the water hole, and Zazu

went and told Mufasa that I didn't like the grass on the west side. Then Mufasa came by and asked me what was wrong with the grass!"

"I know what you mean," said Pembe. "You can't do anything without that flying newspaper telling the whole world about it."

Muwa, a zebra, joined the group with her son, Sukari. He nodded and said, "And then we get into trouble."

"What kind of trouble?" asked Muwa. "What have you been up to?"

"All we were doing was having a little fun yesterday," said Sukari.

Cheka spoke up. "Yeah, what's with Zazu anyway? Sukari, Lulu, Nzuri, and I were chasing the baby ostriches, and the next thing we know, Mufasa comes running up and tells us to stop being mean to them."

"Well, Zazu was only doing his job," said Pembe. "He has to keep the king informed."

"If you ask me, he's overdoing it," said Sukari.

"We've got to do something about that bird," said Nzee. "I'm afraid to open my mouth."

"We could give Zazu wrong information," said Cheka. "That way, he'd get in trouble with Mufasa."

"That sounds like fun," said Nzuri.

"No, it doesn't," said Nzee. She sighed. "You children will have to think of better games to play. Pembe, Muwa, and I will discuss this further."

"I think we should call a council of the animals," said Pembe.

"Do we have to include the ostriches?" asked Muwa. "They have such a short attention span."

The adult animals went off to talk and graze a short distance from the water hole. The young ones stayed and frolicked in the water. Cheka filled his trunk and splashed the others. Then he motioned to them to gather around.

"Listen, you guys, I've made up a game for us to play. It's called get-Zazu."

"But," said Lulu, "Mama told us—"

"Give me a break, Lulu," Cheka said. "Since when do we wait for adults to do anything? They don't want us to have any fun."

"I'm with you, Cheka," said Nzuri. "I'm really tired of Zazu's tattletale ways. How do you play get-Zazu?"

Cheka looked around. "We're going to make up stories."

"I love stories," said Lulu. "But I don't want anyone to get hurt."

"Aw, come on," said Sukari. "We're not going to hurt anyone."

"Don't worry, Lulu. It'll be fun," said Nzuri.

"Why don't we pretend a terrible beast is sneaking around the Pride Lands!" said Cheka. "We can start a rumor about it. Zazu is sure to tell Mufasa. But there won't be any beast at all!"

Sukari laughed and began chasing

Nzuri [illegible] "[illegible] Zazu [illegible]

When the [illegible] quieted down, [illegible] said, "We can get the other animals to start talking about the beast. You know how everyone loves to gossip."

"[illegible]ell!" said Sukari.

"I like this idea," Nzuri said. "The jungle newspaper will go straight to Mufasa [illegible] a false alarm." She giggled.

"Let's get the baby ostriches to [illegible]," said Chuka. "They're always scared [illegible] running around. They'll get everybody really worried!"

Chuka filled his trunk and sprayed the others again.

"[illegible] Zazu!" Sukari cried.

They all laughed.

Poor [illegible] the [illegible] young ostriches overheard Chuka's plan. [illegible] have no idea what trouble [illegible] can cause, she thought. She had to find her babies and warn them about [illegible] the dangers of [illegible] like [illegible] quite big mess [illegible] all around.

CHAPTER 3

Nzuri, [illegible], Chuka, and Sukari met the ostrich babies near the water hole the next day and told them how to play [illegible] Zazu.

"Should we have the [illegible] wander around and ask everyone if they've seen or heard a strange beast in the Pride Lands?" asked [illegible].

"Why should we do that?" asked his sister, [illegible].

"Because we want everyone to start worrying," said [illegible].

"If we get everyone spooked about the beast, Zazu will hear about it and report to Mufasa. Zazu will look silly for

exploring it," explained Sukari.

"[illegible]," said Maya.

"Are you sure we should [illegible] today?" asked Pamba.

[illegible] Pamba [illegible] such a scaredy-cat. "This will be fun," said Maya.

"And [illegible] it'll be a [illegible] to watch Zazu get [illegible] at by Mufasa," [illegible] Sukari. [illegible] these branches [illegible] already forgotten [illegible] chased [illegible] the other day, she thought.

Maya and Pamba went [illegible] and asked all the animals they met whether they had heard about the strange [illegible] in the Pride Lands. None of them knew of [illegible], but they said they'd keep their eyes and ears open.

Meanwhile, Zazu was giving Mufasa his morning report.

[illegible] the problem [illegible] the springboks are [illegible] all [illegible] about [illegible]

[illegible] having springing matches. [illegible] have [illegible] to stay out of their way."

[illegible] right [illegible]," said Mufasa. "I'll [illegible]."

"[illegible]," [illegible] Zazu. [illegible] also a problem with the elephants. They [illegible] talking [illegible] tall [illegible] their trunks [illegible]

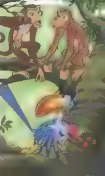
[illegible]

[illegible] there anything else?"

"That's all for [illegible] this morning [illegible]."

"[illegible]," said Mufasa. "I [illegible] see the springboks."

Zazu [illegible] flew [illegible] morning snack [illegible]



Scratch talking to his friend Kwaliro about a strange beast.

"What is this beast?" asked Zazu.

"I'm not quite sure," said Scratch. "I just heard some ostriches talking about it."

"[illegible] sounds like bad news," said Kwaliro. "Do you think it can climb trees?"

"[illegible] better check on this right away," exclaimed Zazu.

He flew to the far edge of the plains and the Zuberi River. A [illegible] over the river and sneaked out of the Pride Lands. A herd of gazelles was grazing on the rich grass. Zazu flew down.

"[illegible] morning, my friends," he said. "Have any of you seen or heard a strange beast sneaking around here?"

"[illegible] have not seen it, but we've heard about it," said one gazelle.

"What have you heard about it? From whom and where?" asked Zazu.

"[illegible] some of the zebras," replied the gazelle.

"Where [illegible] strange beast?" asked Zazu.

"Down at the water hole."

"What did he say about this strange creature?" asked Zazu.

"He said he heard it make gurgling sounds and that it had three horns and a big ugly nose," answered the gazelle.

"I think I'd better go down there and find out about this," said Zazu.

He headed straight for the water hole. There he found Nzuri and some other young antelopes drinking water.

"Has anyone seen or heard of a beast wandering around the Pride Lands?" asked Zazu.

"I thought I saw something strange in the forest near the river," said Nzuri.

"What did it look like? Did it have three horns and a big ugly nose?" asked Zazu.

Nzuri nodded. "Well, at [illegible] all that's [illegible] three horns and a big ugly nose."

"And did it make a strange gurgling sound?" asked Zazu.

"I didn't hear anything," said Nzuri, looking down at her hooves. "I was too far away. It was horrible looking."

"Are you sure?" asked Zazu.

"Oh yes!" said Nzuri. "It had long sharp teeth too." The more she talked about the beast, the bigger and uglier it became.

"Very upsetting. This must be reported to the king right away!" and Zazu [illegible] off to tell Mufasa about the menace.

Mufasa had just come back from talking to the springboks and was resting with Sarabi. Zazu flew up and breathlessly told him about the beast.

"I'd better have a look," said Mufasa.

[illegible]

"[illegible] unpleasant," said Zazu.

"An animal like that might be dangerous," said Mufasa.

"Oh, very dangerous. I'll spread the word far and wide to help with the search!" said Zazu.

So Mufasa went off to look for the beast. First he talked to Boma the Cape buffalo. Boma was nervous because an elephant had told him about the beast. He hadn't seen anything yet. But if an elephant was scared, he was scared too.

Mufasa searched for the beast all day. The cheetahs told him they hadn't seen the beast, only heard about it from some little ostriches.

As darkness fell over the Pride Lands, Mufasa had no choice but to stop searching. He wondered if Zazu had any more news. Mufasa knew he wouldn't sleep well until the mystery of the beast was solved.

CHAPTER 4

The next morning, the young animals gathered at the water hole. Sukari didn't think the beast story was [illegible]. "Mufasa searched [illegible] didn't find [illegible]. It was a wild beast chase," he said. Nzuri, the elephants, and the little ostriches agreed with him.

"How can we fool Zazu this time?" asked Cheka.

"Maybe we should pretend there's another strange beast wandering all over the Pride Lands," said Sukari. [illegible] at once, telling everyone the false news.

"Nala [illegible] thing [illegible] great," she added.

"[illegible] about making plans for [illegible] night?" asked [illegible].

"I have [illegible] different [illegible]," said Nala.

"[illegible]," said [illegible]. "Why don't we [illegible]?"

[illegible]

"[illegible]," [illegible] Zazu. [illegible] Nala [illegible] the [illegible]. Masai [illegible] with her in the forest near the river.

[illegible]

"This will be fun," said Sukari, [illegible] and Masai [illegible] to the river.

[illegible] Zazu was [illegible] when he saw [illegible] animals [illegible] the [illegible] listening [illegible].

"Oh, Zazu, I haven't seen my brother Masai for hours. Maybe the strange beast caught him!"

"Where did you last see him?" asked Zazu.

"Well, we were playing hide-and-[illegible] near the trees near [illegible]. I went off to hide [illegible], and when I came back, he was gone," [illegible].

"All right, take it easy. [illegible] find him," said Zazu.

"[illegible] my mother [illegible] she'll be worried. Promise?"

"Sometimes it's better if bad news waits until it can become good news," said Zazu. He flew off and told Mufasa about Masai. "Perhaps the beast [illegible] him," he finished.

Mufasa was the best tracker in the Pride Lands, and he [illegible] everywhere [illegible] Stones [illegible] overhead. He and Zazu looked behind each of the [illegible]. [illegible] trace of Masai [illegible]. The [illegible] checked

the elephant graveyard, even though it was forbidden. [illegible] the [illegible] the river.

"Let's search the forest," Mufasa said.

Zazu [illegible] He heard a rustling. "[illegible]ook!" he cried.

[illegible] Mufasa [illegible] looking out from [illegible] there [illegible].

"Where have you been?" asked Mufasa. Zazu [illegible] Mufasa [illegible]

[illegible]

"He wasn't lost, sire," said [illegible]. "We were playing in the forest."

"[illegible] glad to hear that. [illegible] must have been a mistake," said Mufasa.

"[illegible]," began Zazu.

Mufasa laughed. "Party [illegible] at least."

Zazu [illegible] was sure [illegible]

[illegible]

side Mufasa and then flew off.

Although he was annoyed, Mufasa said nothing. When he got back to the water hole, he heard the animals calling Zazu "the flying false alarm" and talking about his mistakes. Mufasa shook his head and [illegible] his way back to Pride Rock.

"This is more like it," said Sukari, staring after Mufasa.

"Yeah. Zazu is starting to look like the silly [illegible] that he is!" [illegible] laughed.

"Let's [illegible] another trick," said Pamba.

"We can make Zazu believe there's an earthquake," said Lulu. She began [illegible].

Nzuri laughed. "That won't work [illegible]. Besides, when there's an earthquake, everyone feels it."

Sukari cleared his throat. "I have an excellent idea. Let's tell Zazu that hyenas have grabbed an antelope."

"[illegible] not sure I like that one," said Nzuri with a sneer. "[illegible] about he was

grabbing a zebra!"

"Better yet, he was grabbing a baby wildebeest!" said Sukari.

"[illegible]," and Nzuri [illegible] and [illegible] the other animals raced off. They found Zazu [illegible] looking worried.

"Zazu! The hyenas have attacked a baby wildebeest!" exclaimed [illegible].

"Are you sure? Where?" asked Zazu.

"Over by the river," said Sukari. "One of the gazelles told us."

"When?" asked Zazu.

"Just a few minutes ago," said Nzuri. "Please hurry!"

Zazu went straight to Mufasa and told him what he had heard. Mufasa hesitated. Suppose Zazu was wrong again? On the other hand, suppose he was right. There was no time to lose.

They raced to the edge of the river. The wildebeests were calmly grazing.

"No one is hurting us," said a wildebeest. "We haven't seen [illegible] in ages."

They're always changing their mind with your brother Scar."

"What's got into you, Zazu?" asked Mufasa. "This is the third time you've exaggerated [illegible] a false alarm!"

"I'm sure," mumbled Zazu. "I was only reporting . . ."

"I understand, Zazu," said Mufasa, stalking back to Pride Rock. "But [illegible] days ago you said there was a beast wandering around. I saw [illegible] you said one of the little [illegible] was missing, and then [illegible] told me a baby wildebeest had been attacked by [illegible] I'm beginning to wonder about your judgment."

"But, sire—"

"Check your facts," Mufasa said angrily and broke into a gallop.

"[illegible] feeling like a baby bird," Zazu said to himself. "Three [illegible] in two days. [illegible] turning into a [illegible] babbling [illegible]! What will I do if Mufasa fires me?"

CHAPTER 5

Back at Pride Rock, Mufasa puzzled over why Zazu was making so many mistakes. It was true he often reported petty stories, but they'd always been true. Mufasa thought back over the past two days.

It was odd that Zazu had reported so many mistakes in such a short time. The last [illegible] seemed to fit a pattern [illegible] but what did that [illegible]? It was probably only coincidence.

Meanwhile, Zazu had ascended the skies in an effort to fly away from his dark thoughts. But he couldn't stop thinking no matter how high he flew.

There was [illegible] what will [illegible] the [illegible]. Without the [illegible] water [illegible] will be empty. I'll have [illegible] to sleep and [illegible] found looking at the wide world. But [illegible] have the same meaning.

[illegible] Zebras, antelopes, and wildebeests were grazing peacefully. The elephants were lumbering along, [illegible] looking for [illegible]. Bonsa [illegible] was [illegible] pool.

The sight of Bonsa brought back a memory of the time Zazu had spotted a stampede of Cape buffaloes. A storm had [illegible] up in the distance, which was bad enough. But then he'd seen an immense dust cloud moving toward the Pride Lands and heard the awful thunder of the herd in the distance. The buffaloes had [illegible] large numbers and [illegible] the [illegible]. They were [illegible] of where they were

going, and they were coming straight for the Pride Lands.

Zazu remembered how [illegible] and steady Mufasa had [illegible] he'd reported [illegible]. Mufasa [illegible] well [illegible] near Pride Rock. He had [illegible] a plan [illegible] Mufasa and Zazu thought.

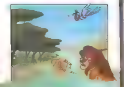
The [illegible]

[illegible] I remember [illegible] Zazu [illegible] upstream [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Zazu [illegible] "We will [illegible] worry about."

"Yes, I know [illegible] keep [illegible] unexpected.



Za[illegible] Mufasa had [illegible] something serious [illegible] Sarabi about [illegible] hide [illegible] with his big ears in the area

[illegible] believe this command [illegible] I mean [illegible] have [illegible] M[illegible] healthy temper [illegible] few minutes [illegible] doubled back And a good [illegible] damage [illegible] could see what [illegible] river [illegible] Mufasa and Sarabi

[illegible] Mufasa Sarabi! [illegible] A water snake! Get out of the river."

They [illegible] thanked me. Mufasa was [illegible] but he said [illegible] Zazu."

[illegible] great [illegible] Z[illegible] thought [illegible] few [illegible] Rafiki [illegible] wise [illegible] where he is

CHAPTER

6

Zazu flew low over Zuli Falls. He looked down, hoping he'd see Rafiki gathering plants. [illegible] would be good to talk [illegible] the [illegible] Maybe Rafiki could help [illegible]

"Wait a second," Zazu [illegible] "What's [illegible] the black mass?" Zazu flew down for a closer look.

"Elephants!" he cried. A chill [illegible] down his spine [illegible] to his wingtips.

"Hippo elephants [illegible]," [illegible] Zazu. [illegible] are [illegible] running everything [illegible] heading [illegible] the Pride Lands. And [illegible] [illegible]

Z[illegible] circled around and headed [illegible] Pride Rock. "[illegible] get [illegible]" he cried.

But then he thought, "What if no one believes me?" It was the joke of the Pride Lands because of his false alarms. But this one was not false. He had seen the ants with his own eyes.

"Mufasa will believe me," Zazu said to himself. "He must. The entire kingdom is in danger. If those ants get to the river and cross it, all will be lost."

Zazu flew straight [illegible] to look where he found Mufasa and Sarabi.

"Mufasa! Sire, the Pride Lands are in great danger!" Zazu cried. "Army ants are on the march."

Sarabi gasped. "Not army ants!"

"Is this another of your stories?" Mufasa asked.

"Oh, no, sire, [illegible] assure you it is not."

"Where did you hear the news?" asked Sarabi.

"I saw the ants with my own eyes,"

said Zazu, his voice trembling.

Mufasa could [illegible] the [illegible] in Zazu's [illegible]. Army ants were definitely not a joke.

"Where are they?" asked Mufasa, rising to his feet.

"Quickly, [illegible] follow [illegible]. They're just [illegible] of Zulu Falls," said Zazu.

Zazu flew ahead as Mufasa raced across the grasslands to the river and up to Zulu Falls.

Mufasa crossed the [illegible] jumping from rock to rock, keeping an eye out for the crocodiles. When he reached the other side, he leaped onto the rock and looked around. He saw nothing unusual. He walked to the edge of the forest and [illegible], but the waterfall was too loud.

Zazu perched [illegible] tree [illegible] Mufasa enter the forest and disappear.

"Please be careful, Mufasa! [illegible] reached the forest," Zazu called out.

[illegible] Zazu [illegible] there [illegible] [illegible] Mufasa [illegible]

Zazu [illegible] sound [illegible] that [illegible] [illegible] get a closer look.

The [illegible] were [illegible] thrashing about violently.

"Yoicks!" he cried. "Something terrible has happened to Mufasa!"

CHAPTER 7

M[illegible]asa leaped [illegible] roaring and [illegible] his [illegible] He clawed at his mane and rubbed his eyes. His [illegible] with ants.

"The [illegible] Here [illegible]" shouted Zazu, [illegible] Mufasa. Follow my voice!"

Zazu [illegible] Mufasa. [illegible] Mufasa [illegible] followed Zazu's [illegible]. Roaring [illegible] he [illegible] into the water. The ants [illegible] and Mufasa [illegible] the other side of the river.

"[illegible] are [illegible]" Zazu

Yes, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] shake [illegible] [illegible] out of his mane. "Thank you, Zazu. You saved my life. I couldn't [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] those [illegible] bring me. We must warn the others as fast as we can."

"I'll help you warn [illegible] one," replied Zazu, "but I don't know whether he'd believe me."

[illegible] [illegible] them how [illegible] warned me and now you suggest [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for myself, Zazu. You are my most trusted friend," said Mufasa.

"[illegible] glad [illegible] help [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] are," replied Zazu. "Now let's go."

Mufasa and Zazu [illegible] back [illegible] Pride Rock. [illegible] told [illegible] [illegible] the army [illegible], but [illegible] weren't sure whether [illegible] [illegible] he said [illegible] Zazu [illegible] had seen [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Mufasa [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. And [illegible] [illegible]

"Zazu and I have seen a fearsome [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the other side of the river. [illegible] [illegible] they're headed here.

There was a moment of stunned silence. Then Mutasa spoke again.

"[illegible] one must leave immediately."

The animals knew what army ants did. In panic they began running in all directions.

Sarabi stepped to Mutasa's side and asked, "What can I do to help?"

"We must get everyone to move together," said Mutasa. "Zaze, help me get the animals calmed down."

Mutasa, Sarabi, and Zaze yelled to the elders of the herds [illegible] and help young ones. When the animals were quiet, Mutasa told them to follow Sarabi to the high plains.

Next Mutasa asked Pembe, [illegible], Mosi, [illegible] and Nzee to stay and help him stop the ants.

"But how can we stop millions of ants?" asked Pembe.

"I don't know, but I will find a way. Zaze, go north ahead and find out what the ants are doing."

"Hurry," said Zaze. "I'll keep you posted," and she took to the skies.

"Let's go to the river," Mutasa told the others. His mind was racing. He began to form a plan. He hoped and prayed it would work.

"Now here is the plan," Mutasa said to his helpers as they ran across the plain. "The boulders at the top of Zolo Falls act as a dam and let only some of the water through. We must release them by moving them."

"How can we move such big rocks?" asked Mosi.

"The boulders are held in place by smaller rocks," said Mutasa. "If we move the small ones, the boulders will come loose. The river will do the rest of the work for us."

"But, Mutasa, that could be dangerous," said Tudini.

"It's the only way to keep the ants from crossing the river," said Mutasa. "The ants are [illegible] more

dangerous. We have no choice."

"Well, I'm ready for this fight," said Boma. "My grandparents were taken by them years ago. I have never forgotten that awful attack."

"I'm ready too," added Mosa. "Many of my herd were killed in that same attack."

"I remember my father telling me that same story when I was young," said Mufasa. "Now we have a chance to keep it from happening again. So let's be as brave and skillful as we can!"

Mufasa's courage and strength gave the other animals heart. They would follow him no matter what happened, and they began to run faster.

By now Zazu was high over the river and could see the ants. Millions of them marched toward the river. The sound of their paws marching was so loud Zazu could hear it above the roar of the waterfall. And they were headed for the one spot in the river where they could cross:

the spot where Mufasa had chosen for jumping from rock to rock. These same rocks would be the army ants' stepping stones. Zazu knew if they were not stopped, they would make living bridges out of their own bodies, scrambling in a thick black rope from rock to rock till they had reached the other side. But Zazu was sure they would not succeed if the current was swift and strong enough.

Zazu saw Mufasa and his army reach the river and flew down to report.

"The ants are coming to cross," he said grimly.

"So I see. Keep your eyes on them," said Mufasa. "We're going to the top of the falls."

"I'll keep you informed," yelled Zazu, and he flew back over the river with [illegible] in his heart.

CHAPTER 8

Mufasa led his helpers to a rocky path.

"It's not so steep this way," said Mufasa. "But watch your step!" He guided the group up the final few yards to the boulders.

Muwa, Pudini, and Nzee kicked the small rocks out from under the large boulders. Then Pembe and Boma pushed against the boulders as Mufasa directed them. The boulders started to rock.

"We must make sure the boulders fall when most of the ants are in the river," said Mufasa.

Zazu flew to the top of the falls. "Now!" he yelled.

"Push!" shouted Mufasa.

Pembe and Boma pressed their powerful shoulders against the boulders. Muwa, Pudini, and Nzee kicked at the last remaining rocks underneath. At last, the boulders rolled over the falls and crashed into the river.

Like a tidal wave, the river gushed over the falls with a tremendous roar into the water below. The wave swept away everything in its path, including the ants. Water rose over the banks like an enormous blue snake. It flooded the forest, swallowing the ants still on the land in a roaring cascade of foaming water.

Mufasa and his group cheered and jumped for joy. The Pride Lands were saved. So were many lives.

"So then what happened?" asked Kopa.

"Mufasa and the others congratulated one another on their success in saving the

Pride Lands. We cheered all the way back to Pride Rock," said Zazu.

"Was Mufasa still mad at you?" asked Kopa.

"No, he said he was delighted to have me as his trusted steward," said Zazu.

"And what about Sarabi and the other animals?" asked Kopa.

"Sarabi had taken all the animals to safety on the high plains. When we got to them, Mufasa called out, 'Sarabi, we have won!' A cheer went up as the word spread."

"Boy, they must have been glad to hear that!" said Kopa.

"Everyone was glad!" Zazu went on. "Sarabi came running up. 'Oh, Mufasa, we were all terrified that the ants would get you. I'm so glad you're safe,' she said."

"Weren't they proud of you too?" asked Kopa.

"They were. I flew overhead, and everyone cheered as I circled above. That

was the most joyful moment I had ever known, my little prince. I truly felt like a hero."

"Did they ever find out what really happened with the false alarms?" asked Kopa.

"I'm about to tell you," said Zazu. "Mufasa made me feel as powerful as a Marshall eagle. He said, 'Zazu has kept us from danger! We must never doubt his word again.'"

"That's it?" said Kopa, wrinkling his nose.

"Not quite. You see, Nzuri, Lulu, Cheka, Sukari, Pamba, and Mayai, the young ones who tried to discredit me, felt so guilty, they confessed to Mufasa. He was furious but fair. He told the adult animals that the young ones had something to tell them.

"The young ones were ashamed and hung their heads while Nzuri explained how they were angry with Zazu for spoiling their fun. But they realized now

how dangerous it was to try to discredit someone, especially someone who had the job of watching out for their safety. Their parents were so angry with their children, they wanted to punish them severely.

"But Mufasa was wise. He said, 'As your punishment, I command you, Nzuri, Sukari, Lulu, Cheka, Pamba and Mayai, to help Zazu gather news about all the important events in the Pride Lands. That way, you will learn the difference between fact and story—and you will also be held responsible for everything you say.'"

Kopa grinned. "That's why Rafiki always says, 'When the mouth is bigger than the brain, the feet won't stay on the path.'"

"And that's not all he says," added Zazu. "He also says, 'If the coconut bounces too high when it falls from the tree, don't eat it.'"

"I get it." Kopa giggled. "If

something doesn't seem right, then it's probably wrong."

"Precisely," said Zazu. "Check your facts!"